Archie
ADVENTURE SERIES
NO.8 JAN.
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SEGA®
KNUCKLES™
THE ECHIDNA
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
SPAZ
GALAN
PENDERS
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HEROIC AGE
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KNUCKLES

Book Eight

Dark Vengeance

Part Two of Three

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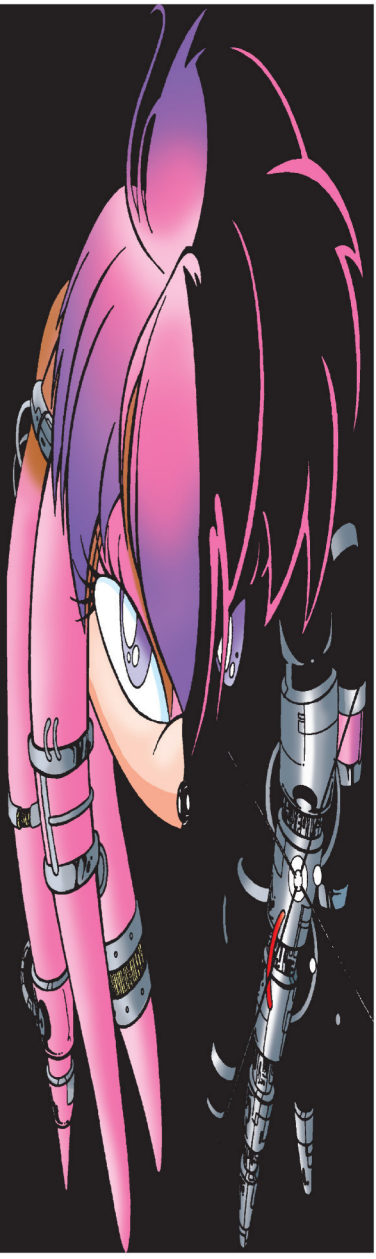
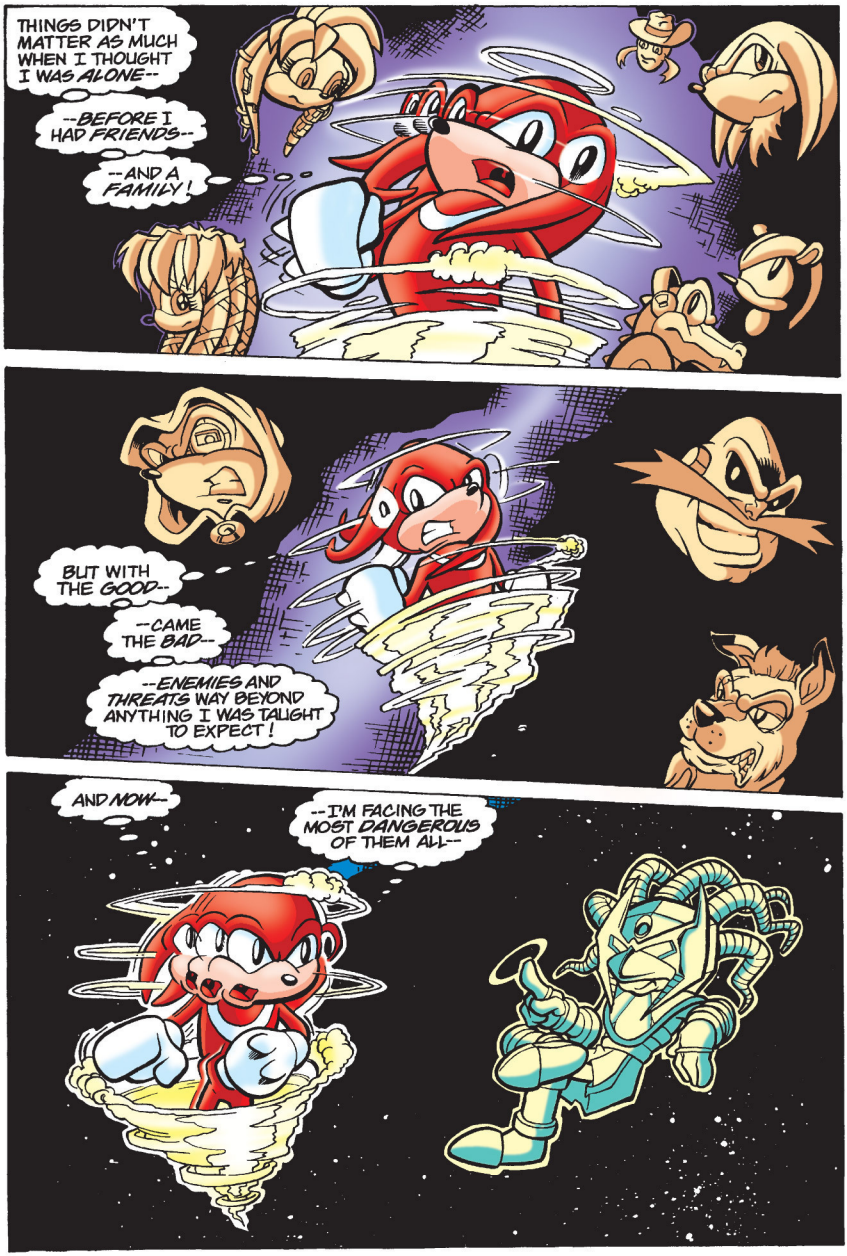
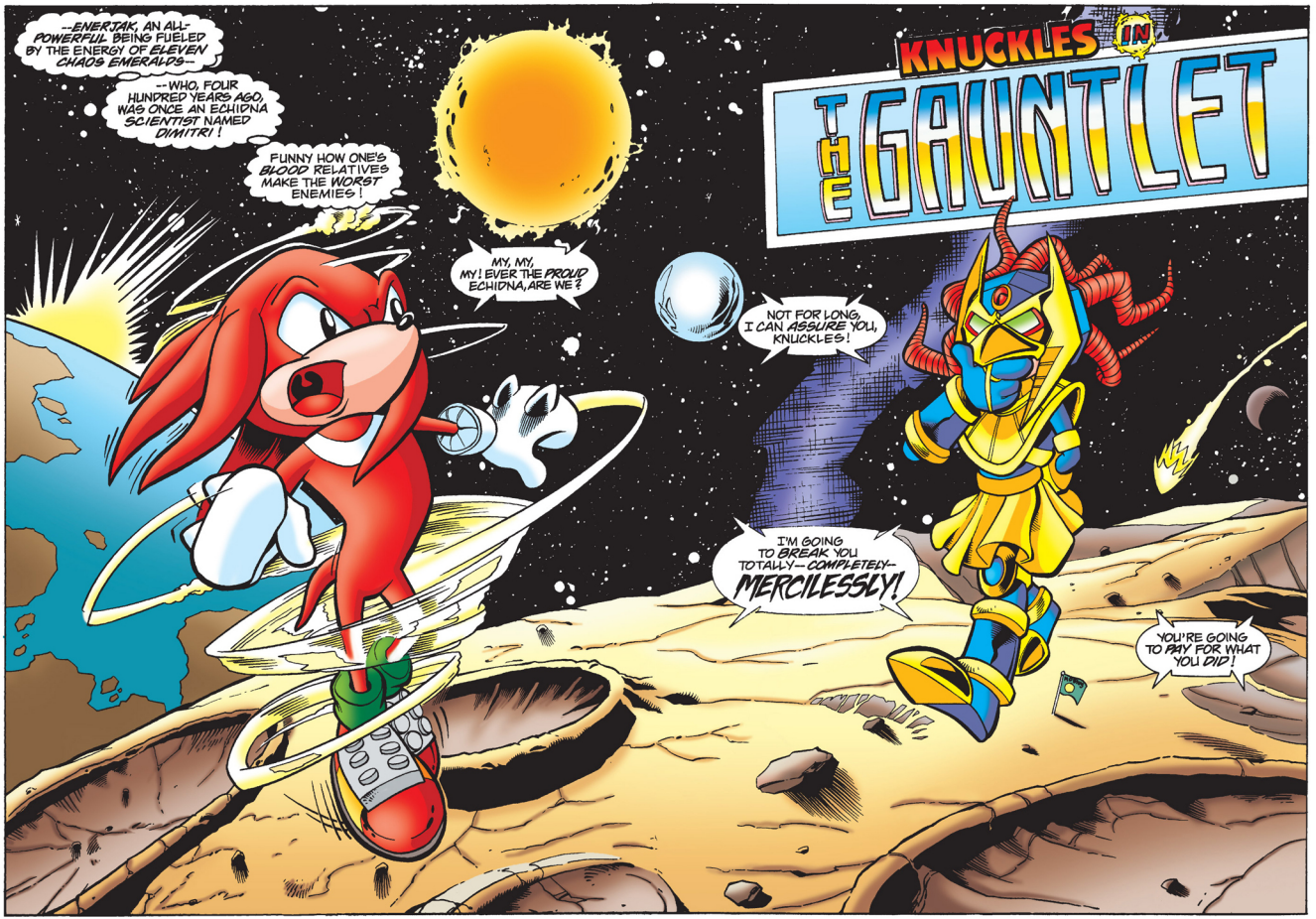


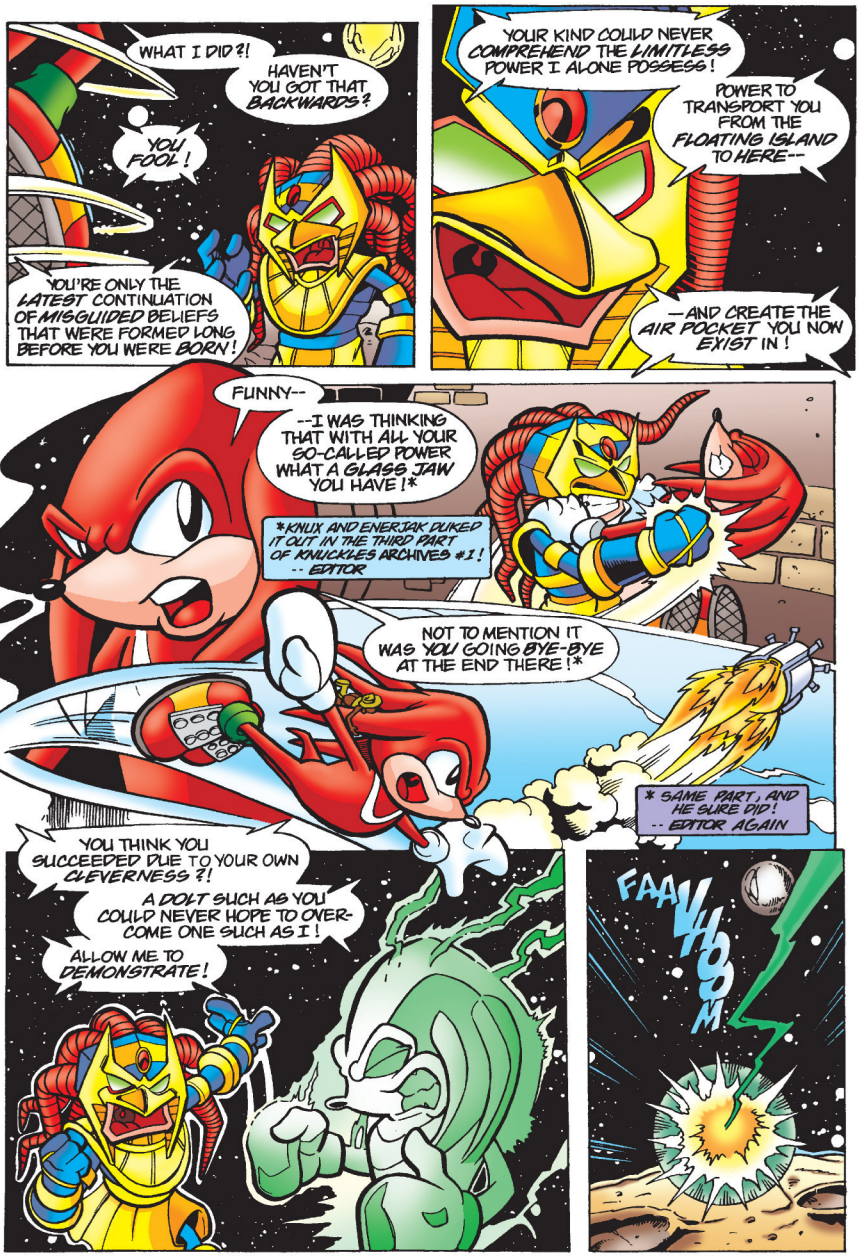
Born to the most noble of Echidna houses, the latest to continue the family heritage and responsibility as Guardian of the Floating Island, defender of all from the forces of evil from the world beyond as well as those who would threaten within, he is none other than Knuckles the Echidna!

Last issue, Knuckles and Julie-Su engaged in a thoughtful discussion involving plenty of questions but few answers. Deciding there was only one party they could turn to, they sought out Archimedes, the enigmatic fire-ant who serves as both friend and mentor. During their quest, they discovered evidence that something bad had happened to the Chaotix. Evidence which pointed to not just one enemy, but two.

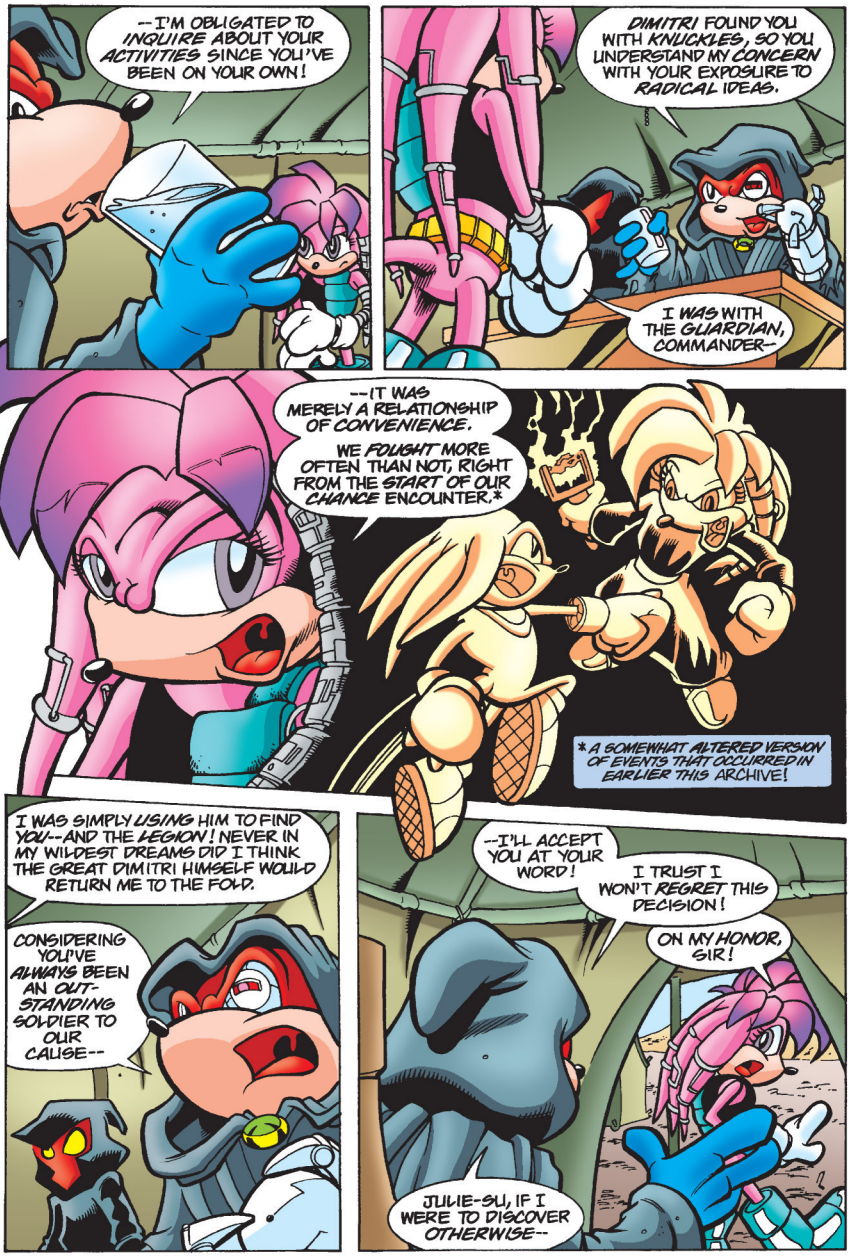
Making their way across the island, Knuckles and Julie-Su were confronted once again by a being more powerful than any other they had ever encountered.

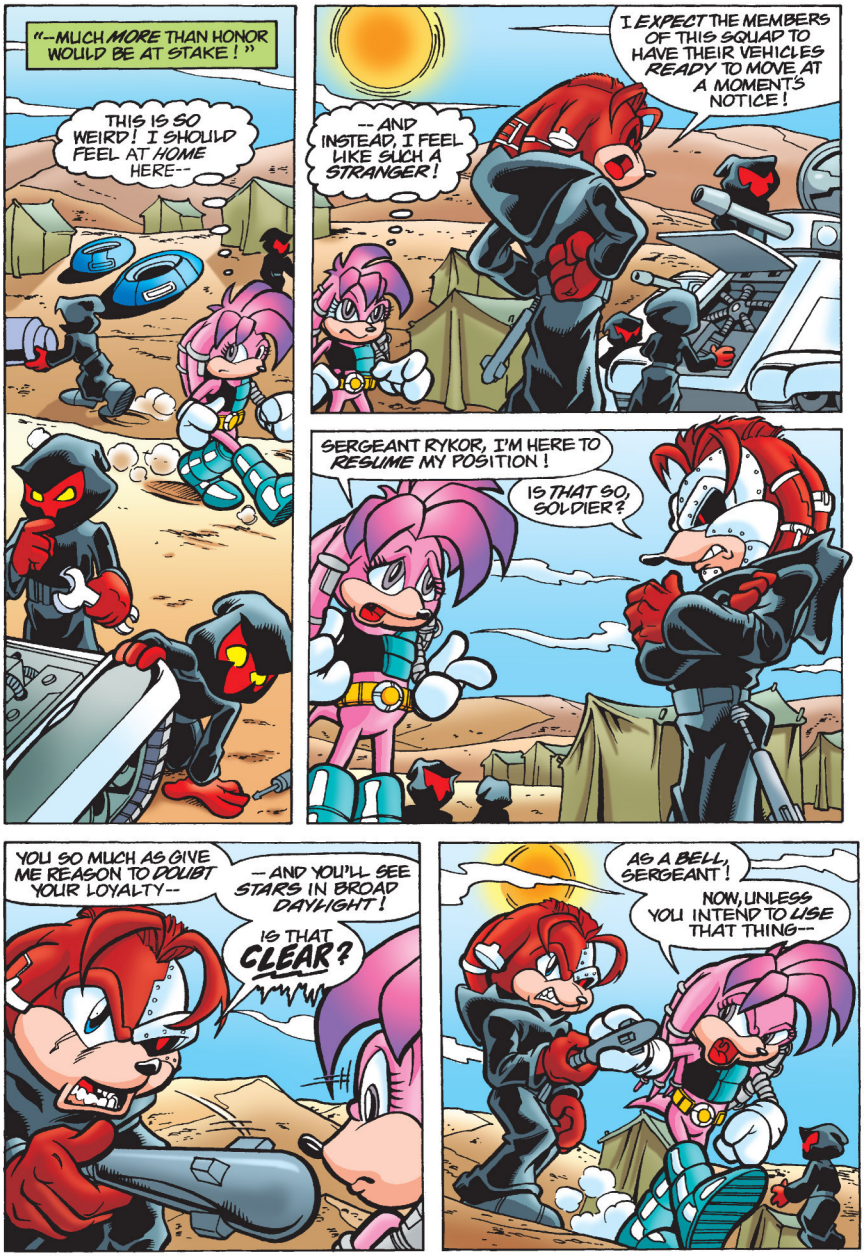

THINGS DIDN'T MATTER AS MUCH WHEN I THOUGHT I WAS ALONE--
--BEFORE I HAD FRIENDS--
--AND A FAMILY!
BUT WITH THE GOOD--
--CAME THE BAD--
--ENEMIES AND THREATS WAY BEYOND ANYTHING I WAS TAUGHT TO EXPECT!
AND NOW--
--I'M FACING THE MOST DANGEROUS OF THEM ALL--


KNUCKLES IN THE GAUNTLET
--ENERJAK, AN ALL-POWERFUL BEING FUELED BY THE ENERGY OF ELEVEN CHAOS EMERALDS--
--WHO, FOUR HUNDRED YEARS AGO, WAS ONCE AN ECHIDNA SCIENTIST NAMED DIMITRI!
FUNNY HOW ONE'S BLOOD RELATIVES MAKE THE WORST ENEMIES!
MY, MY, MY! EVER THE PROUD ECHIDNA, ARE WE?
NOT FOR LONG, I CAN ASSURE YOU, KNUCKLES!
I'M GOING TO BREAK YOU TOTALLY--COMPLETELY--MERCILESSLY!
YOU'RE GOING TO PAY FOR WHAT YOU DID!


WHAT I DID?!
HAVEN'T YOU GOT THAT BACKWARDS?
YOU FOOL!
YOU'RE ONLY THE LATEST CONTINUATION OF MISGUIDED BELIEFS THAT WERE FORMED LONG BEFORE YOU WERE BORN!
YOUR KIND COULD NEVER COMPREHEND THE LIMITLESS POWER I ALONE POSSESS!
POWER TO TRANSPORT YOU FROM THE FLOATING ISLAND TO HERE--
--AND CREATE THE AIR POCKET YOU NOW EXIST IN!
FUNNY--
--I WAS THINKING THAT WITH ALL YOUR SO-CALLED POWER WHAT A GLASS JAW YOU HAVE!*
*KNUX AND ENERJAK DUKED IT OUT IN THE THIRD PART OF KNUCKLES ARCHIVES #1! -- EDITOR
NOT TO MENTION IT WAS YOU GOING BYE-BYE AT THE END THERE!*
* SAME PART, AND HE SURE DID! -- EDITOR AGAIN
YOU THINK YOU SUCCEEDED DUE TO YOUR OWN CLEVERNESS?!
A DOLT SUCH AS YOU COULD NEVER HOPE TO OVER-COME ONE SUCH AS I!
ALLOW ME TO DEMONSTRATE!
FAAVHOOM

OBSERVE! FROM THE SURFACE OF MOBIAN MOON TO THE DEEPEST, DARKEST DEPTHS OF MOBIAN OCEANS!
THIS IS WHAT REAL, ABSOLUTE POWER IS ALL ABOUT--
--THE ABILITY TO DO ANYTHING WITH BUT A THOUGHT!
I GATHER FROM YOUR EXPRESSION--
"--THE REALITY OF YOUR SITUATION IS BEGINNING TO SINK IN!"
I HAD JUST ABOUT GIVEN UP HOPE--
GLUB! GLUB!
GLUB! GLUB!
--OF EVER FINDING YOU, JULIE-SU!
WE SUFFER ENOUGH LOSSES WITHOUT ABANDONING ONE OF OUR OWN!
STILL--


--I'M OBLIGATED TO INQUIRE ABOUT YOUR ACTIVITIES SINCE YOU'VE BEEN ON YOUR OWN!
DIMITRI FOUND YOU WITH KNUCKLES, SO YOU UNDERSTAND MY CONCERN WITH YOUR EXPOSURE TO RADICAL IDEAS.
I WAS WITH THE GUARDIAN, COMMANDER--
--IT WAS MERELY A RELATIONSHIP OF CONVENIENCE.
WE FOUGHT MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, RIGHT FROM THE START OF OUR CHANCE ENCOUNTER.*
*A SOMEWHAT ALTERED VERSION OF EVENTS THAT OCCURRED IN EARLIER THIS ARCHIVE!
I WAS SIMPLY USING HIM TO FIND YOU--AND THE LEGION! NEVER IN MY WILDEST DREAMS DID I THINK THE GREAT DIMITRI HIMSELF WOULD RETURN ME TO THE FOLD.
CONSIDERING YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN AN OUT-STANDING SOLDIER TO OUR CAUSE--
--I'LL ACCEPT YOU AT YOUR WORD!
I TRUST I WON'T REGRET THIS DECISION!
ON MY HONOR, SIR!
JULIE-SU, IF I WERE TO DISCOVER OTHERWISE--

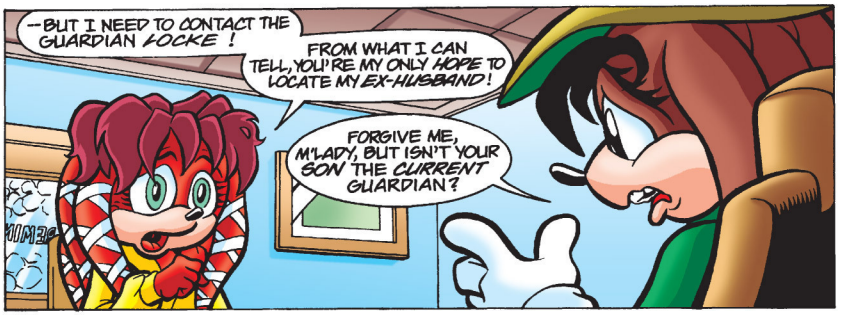

"--MUCH MORE THAN HONOR WOULD BE AT STAKE!"
THIS IS SO WEIRD! I SHOULD FEEL AT HOME HERE--
I EXPECT THE MEMBERS OF THIS SQUAD TO HAVE THEIR VEHICLES READY TO MOVE AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE!
--AND INSTEAD, I FEEL LIKE SUCH A STRANGER!
SERGEANT RYKOR, I'M HERE TO RESUME MY POSITION!
IS THAT SO, SOLDIER?
YOU SO MUCH AS GIVE ME REASON TO DOUBT YOUR LOYALTY--
--AND YOU'LL SEE STARS IN BROAD DAYLIGHT!
IS THAT CLEAR?
AS A BELL, SERGEANT!
NOW, UNLESS YOU INTEND TO USE THAT THING---

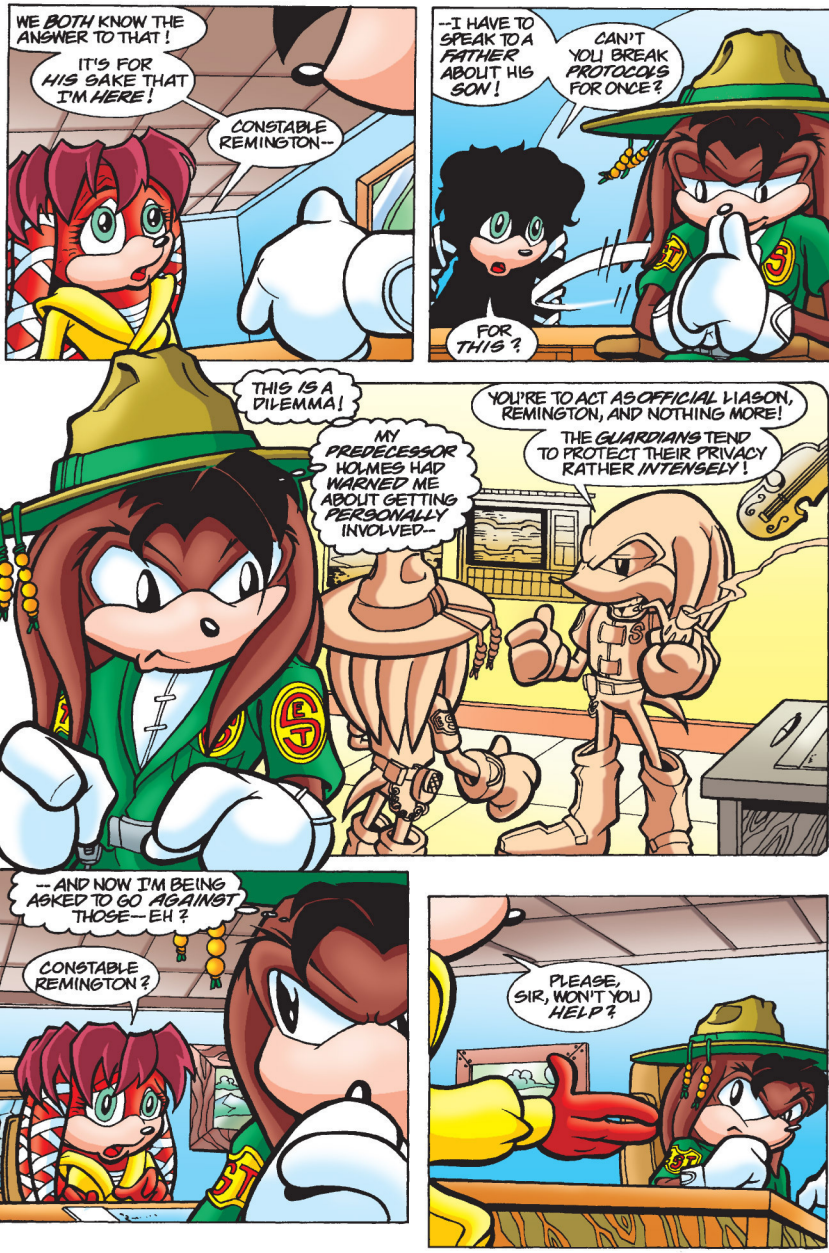
"--I'D LIKE TO CARRY ON MY DUTIES!"
CONSTABLE REMINGTON?
M'LADY, THIS IS A SURPRISE!
TO WHAT DO I OWE THE HONOR?

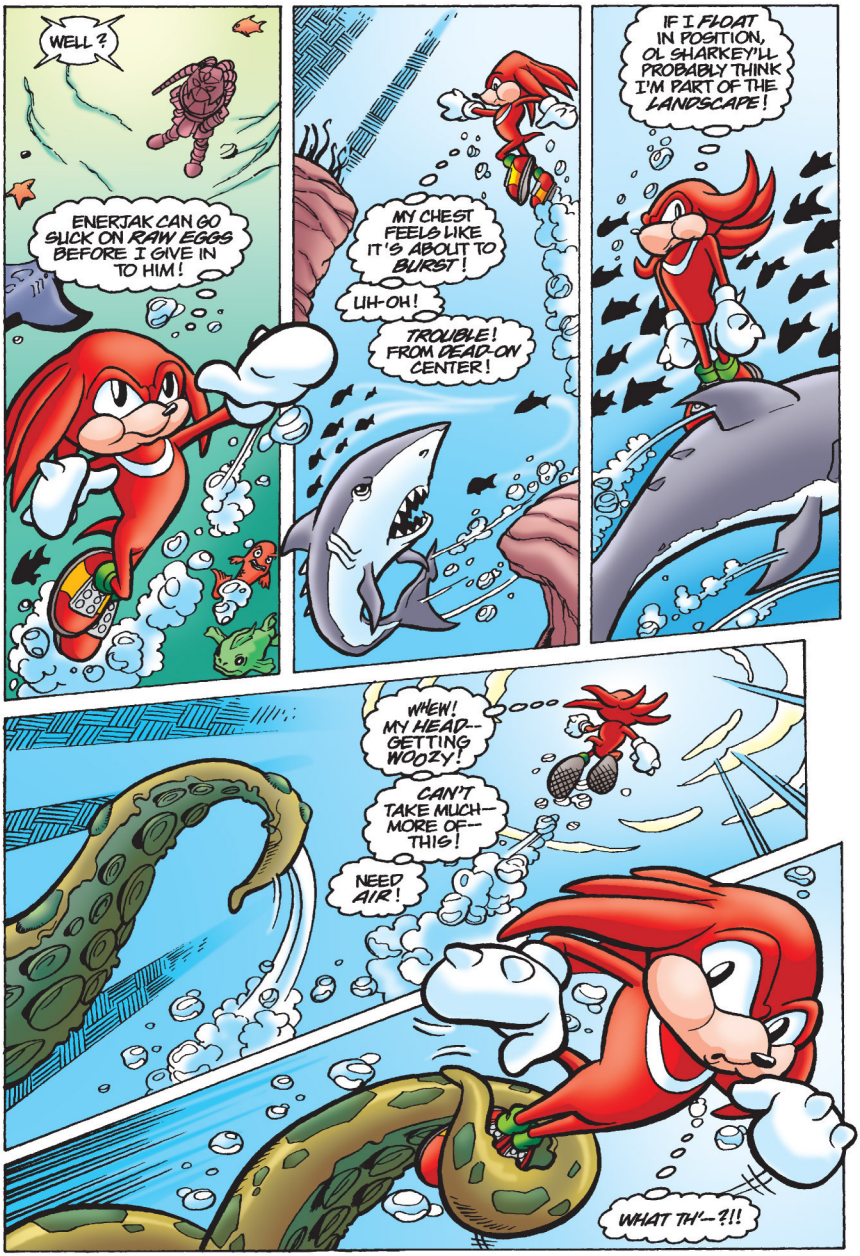
I NEED A FAVOR, CONSTABLE--
--AND I BELIEVE YOU TO BE THE ONLY ONE IN AUTHORITY TO ASSIST ME!

I LIVE TO SERVE, LADY LARA-LE!
ALLOW ME.
THANK YOU, KIND SIR!

NOW THEN--
--HOW MAY I BE OF SERVICE?
THIS MAY COME AS A SURPRISE TO YOU--


--BUT I NEED TO CONTACT THE GUARDIAN LOCKE!
FROM WHAT I CAN TELL, YOU'RE MY ONLY HOPE TO LOCATE MY EX-HUSBAND!
FORGIVE ME, M'LADY, BUT ISN'T YOUR SON THE CURRENT GUARDIAN?

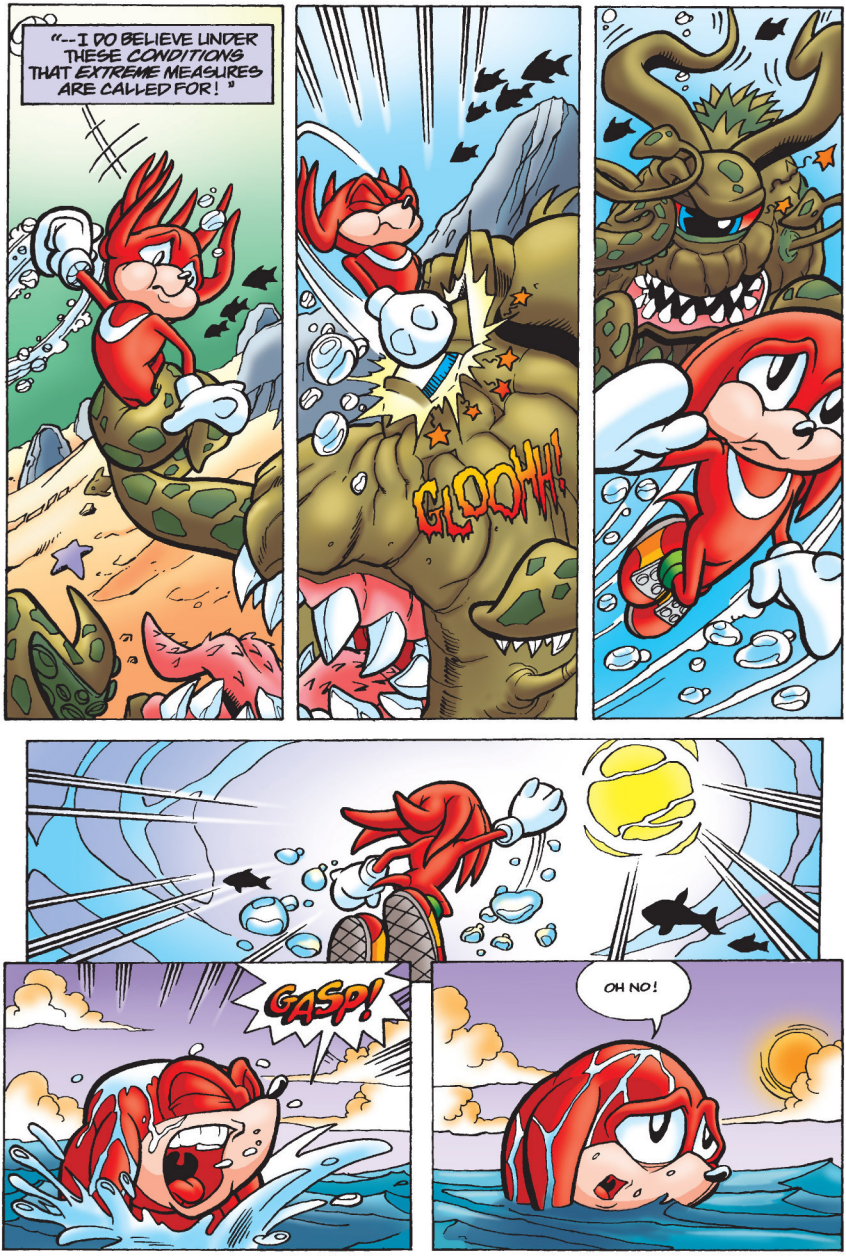

WE BOTH KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT!
IT'S FOR HIS SAKE THAT I'M HERE!
CONSTABLE REMINGTON--
--I HAVE TO SPEAK TO A FATHER ABOUT HIS SON!
CAN'T YOU BREAK PROTOCOLS FOR ONCE?
FOR THIS?
THIS IS A DILEMMA!
MY PREDECESSOR HOLMES HAD WARNED ME ABOUT GETTING PERSONALLY INVOLVED--
YOU'RE TO ACT AS OFFICIAL LIASON, REMINGTON, AND NOTHING MORE!
THE GUARDIANS TEND TO PROTECT THEIR PRIVACY RATHER INTENSELY!
--AND NOW I'M BEING ASKED TO GO AGAINST THOSE-- EH?
CONSTABLE REMINGTON?
PLEASE, SIR, WON'T YOU HELP?

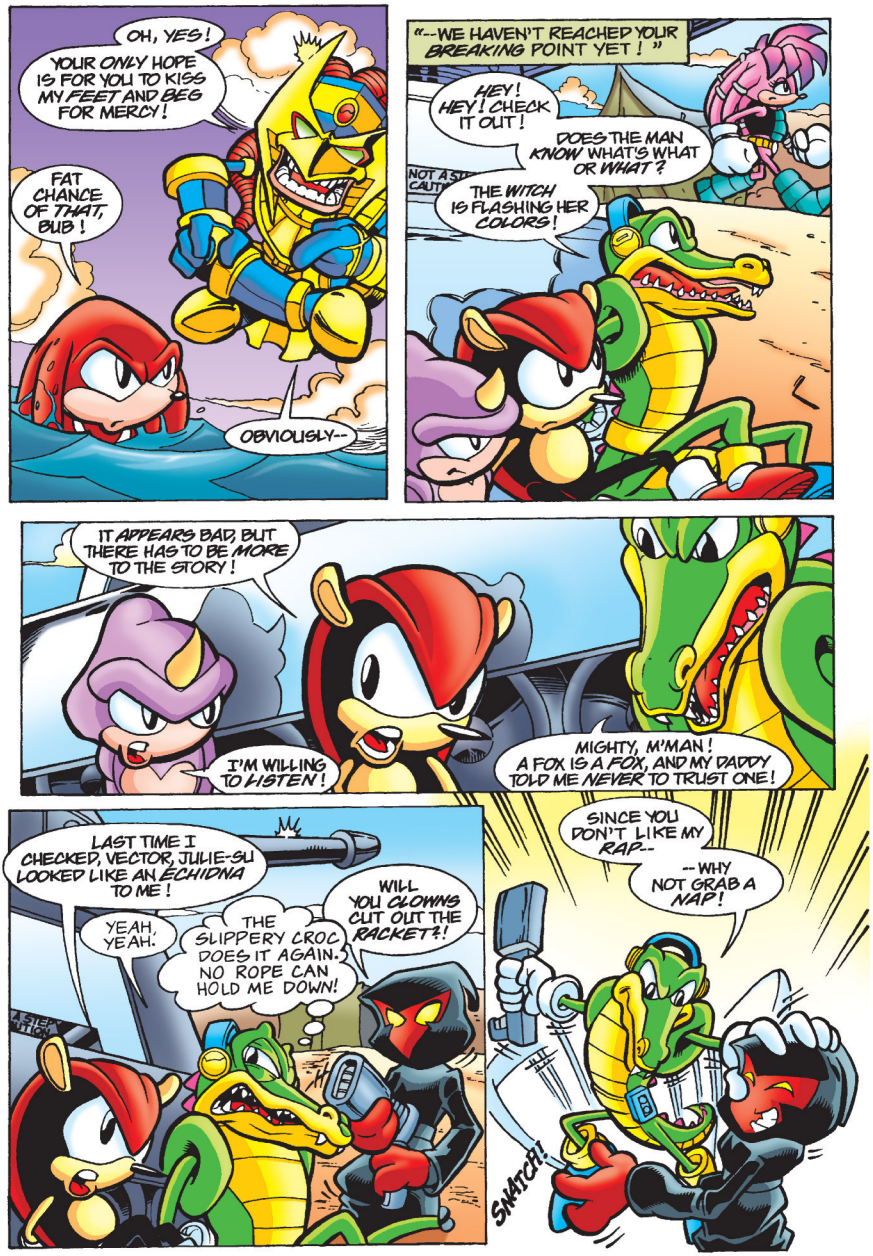

WELL?
ENERJAK CAN GO SUCK ON RAW EGGS BEFORE I GIVE IN TO HIM!
MY CHEST FEELS LIKE IT'S ABOUT TO BURST!
UH-OH!
TROUBLE! FROM DEAD-ON CENTER!
IF I FLOAT IN POSITION, OL SHARKEY'LL PROBABLY THINK I'M PART OF THE LANDSCAPE!
WHEW! MY HEAD-- GETTING WOOZY!
CAN'T TAKE MUCH-- MORE OF-- THIS!
NEED AIR!
WHAT TH'--?!!

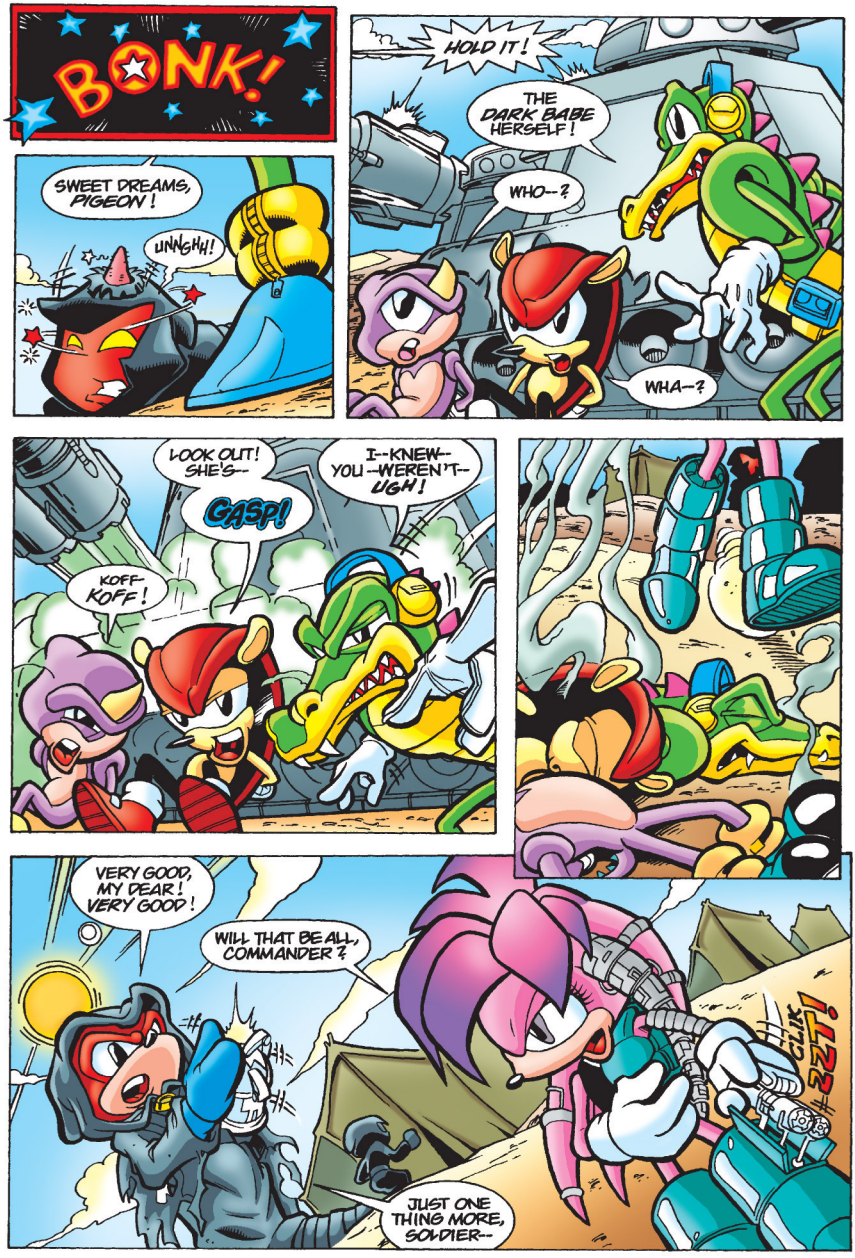
AS IF I DIDN'T HAVE-- ENOUGH PROBLEMS, OL' MASKFACE HAS TO-- COME AND GLOAT!
GLOAT?
THAT'S MUCH TOO MILD A WORD TO DESCRIBE MY DESIRES AT THE MOMENT!
IN FACT, I AM SO THOROUGHLY ENJOYING--
--WATCHING YOU GIVE A WHOLE NEW MEANING TO BEING AT THE BOTTOM OF THE FOOD CHAIN!
YEAH?

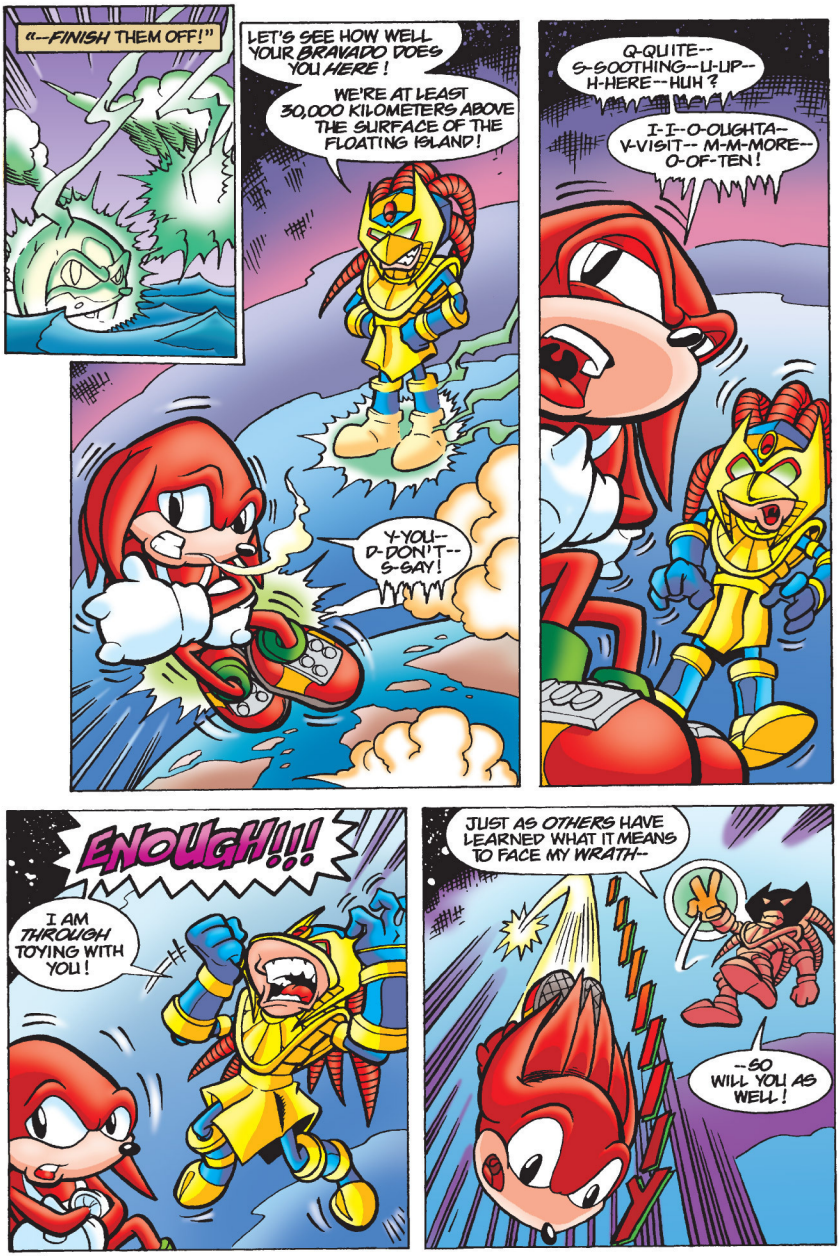
"WELL, IT AIN'T OVER 'TIL IT'S OVER!"
WHA--? WH-WHERE AM I?
EASY, LOCKE! YOU'RE IN SICK BAY!
HAVEN! I'M STILL IN HAVEN!
OOOOH!
TAKE IT EASY, LAD! DON'T STRAIN YOURSELF!
WHAT ABOUT HAWKING? IS HE--?
STILL IN A COMA!
WHAT THE DEVIL HAPPENED, LOCKE?
THE ALARM!
I SUGGEST WE TABLE OUR DISCUSSION, FATHER! THAT SOUNDS SERIOUS!
BREEP! BREEP! BREEP!
WHAT DOESN'T AROUND HERE? EVERYTHING'S A CRISIS!
Y'KNOW, LOCKE, IT'S BEEN AWHILE SINCE I'VE HEARD YOU LAUGH!
BREEP!
REALLY, FATHER--

--THERE HASN'T BEEN ANYTHING TO LAUGH ABOUT IN A LONG TIME!
FUEL PLUG
WILL YOU LOOK AT THAT!
THE DARK SIDE OF OUR FAMILY STRIKES AGAIN!
SAY, ISN'T THAT--?
YES, FATHER, IT LOOKS LIKE KNUCKLES' NEW FRIEND--
--AND IT APPEARS SHE'S REJOINED HER FORMER COMRADES!
SOMETHING'S VERY WRONG HERE!
NO SIGN OF KNUCKLES--THE DARK LEGION GETTING READY TO STRIKE--!
YES, BUT STRIKE WHERE?
WHERE ELSE BUT--
ECHIDNAOPOLIS!
IN MY OPINION--

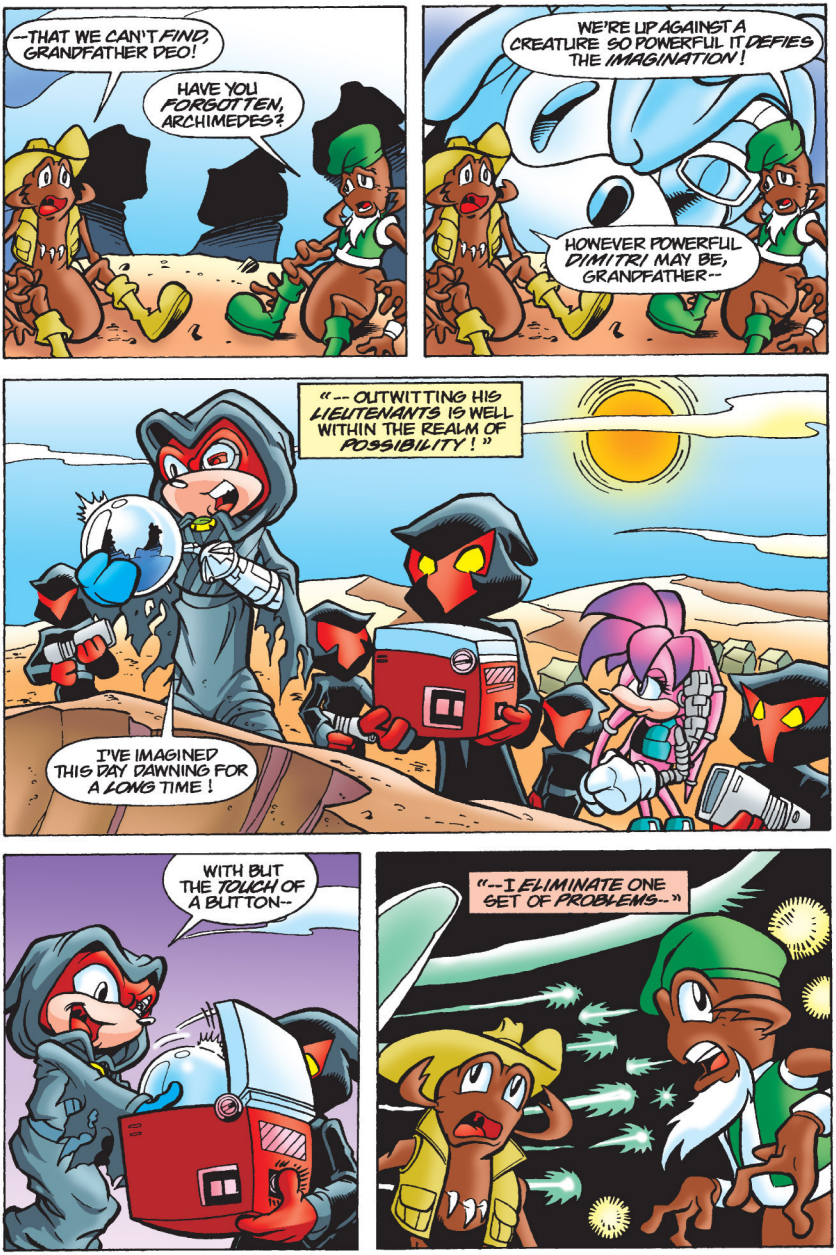

"--I DO BELIEVE UNDER THESE CONDITIONS THAT EXTREME MEASURES ARE CALLED FOR!"
GLOOHH!
GASP!
OH NO!

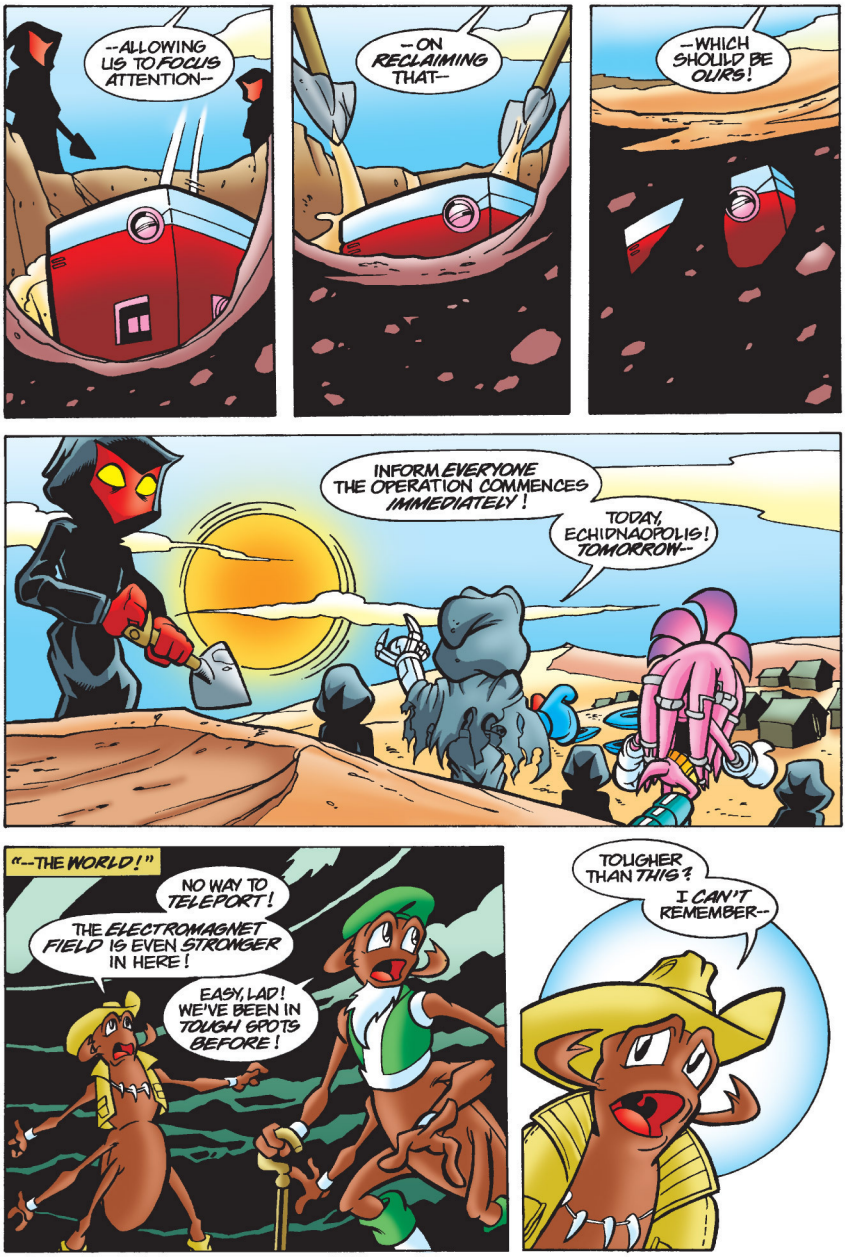

OH, YES!
YOUR ONLY HOPE IS FOR YOU TO KISS MY FEET AND BEG FOR MERCY!
FAT CHANCE OF THAT, BUB!
OBVIOUSLY--
"--WE HAVEN'T REACHED YOUR BREAKING POINT YET!"
HEY! HEY! CHECK IT OUT!
DOES THE MAN KNOW WHAT'S WHAT OR WHAT?
THE WITCH IS FLASHING HER COLORS!
IT APPEARS BAD, BUT THERE HAS TO BE MORE TO THE STORY!
I'M WILLING TO LISTEN!
MIGHTY, M'MAN! A FOX IS A FOX, AND MY DADDY TOLD ME NEVER TO TRUST ONE!
LAST TIME I CHECKED, VECTOR, JULIE-SU LOOKED LIKE AN ECHIDNA TO ME!
YEAH, YEAH.
THE SLIPPERY CROC DOES IT AGAIN. NO ROPE CAN HOLD ME DOWN!
WILL YOU CLOWNS CUT OUT THE RACKET?!
SINCE YOU DON'T LIKE MY RAP--
-- WHY NOT GRAB A NAP!
SNATCH!

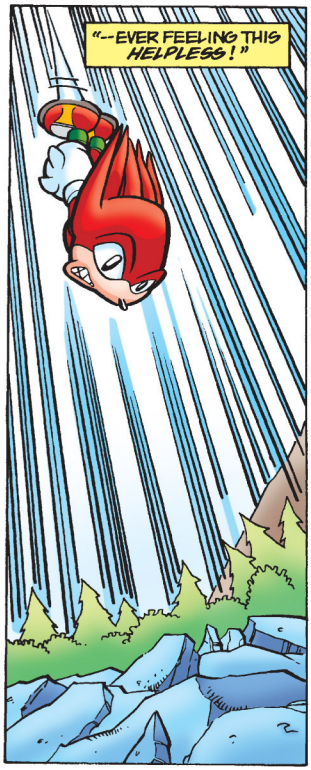

BONK!
SWEET DREAMS, PIGEON!
UNNGH!!
HOLD IT!
THE DARK BABE HERSELF!
WHO--?
WHA--?
LOOK OUT! SHE'S--
GASP!
I--KNEW-- YOU --WEREN'T-- UGH!
KOFF KOFF!
VERY GOOD, MY DEAR! VERY GOOD!
WILL THAT BE ALL, COMMANDER?
CLIK
-ZZT!
JUST ONE THING MORE, SOLDIER--

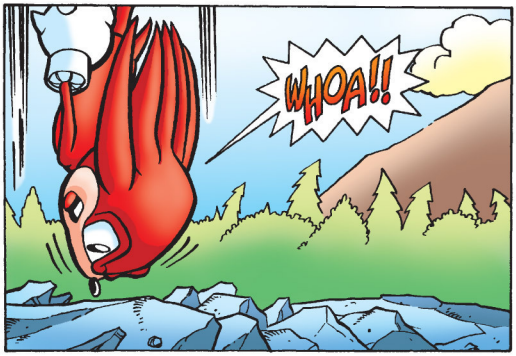

"--FINISH THEM OFF!"
LET'S SEE HOW WELL YOUR BRAVADO DOES YOU HERE!
WE'RE AT LEAST 30,000 KILOMETERS ABOVE THE SURFACE OF THE FLOATING ISLAND!
Y-YOU-- D-DON'T-- S-SAY!
Q-QUITE-- S-SOOTHING--LI-LIP-- H-HERE--HUH?
I-I--O-OUGHTA-- V-VISIT-- M-M-MORE-- O-OF-TEN!
ENOUGH!!!
I AM THROUGH TOYING WITH YOU!
JUST AS OTHERS HAVE LEARNED WHAT IT MEANS TO FACE MY WRATH--
--SO WILL YOU AS WELL!

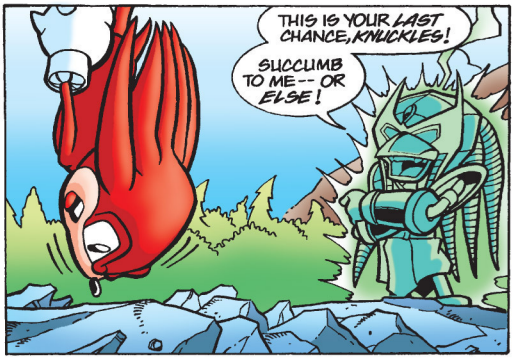
"I REFUSE TO ACCEPT THE POSSIBILITY OF THEY'RE *NOT* BEING *ANY* WAY OUT OF THIS--"


--THAT WE CAN'T FIND, GRANDFATHER DEO!
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN, ARCHIMEDES?
WE'RE UP AGAINST A CREATURE SO POWERFUL IT DEFIES THE IMAGINATION!
HOWEVER POWERFUL DIMITRI MAY BE, GRANDFATHER--
"-- OUTWITTING HIS LIEUTENANTS IS WELL WITHIN THE REALM OF POSSIBILITY!"
I'VE IMAGINED THIS DAY DAWNING FOR A LONG TIME!
WITH BUT THE TOUCH OF A BUTTON--
"--I ELIMINATE ONE SET OF PROBLEMS--"


--ALLOWING US TO FOCUS ATTENTION--
--ON RECLAIMING THAT--
--WHICH SHOULD BE OURS!
INFORM EVERYONE THE OPERATION COMMENCES IMMEDIATELY!
TODAY, ECHIDNAOPOLIS! TOMORROW--
"--THE WORLD!"
NO WAY TO TELEPORT!
THE ELECTROMAGNET FIELD IS EVEN STRONGER IN HERE!
EASY, LAD! WE'VE BEEN IN TOUGH SPOTS BEFORE!
TOUGHER THAN THIS?
I CAN'T REMEMBER--


"--EVER FEELING THIS HELPLESS!"


WHOA!!


THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE, KNUCKLES!
SUCCUMB TO ME-- OR ELSE!

BHHRRRRRSTP!

VERY WELL, FOOLISH ONE!
IF I COULDN'T FIGURATIVELY TAKE YOU APART--

--TAKING YOU APART LITERALLY WILL DO JUST AS WELL.
ENJOY LIFE AS A NEURON!
HA HA HA HA HA HA
To be continued...
(Maybe... possibly... we hope?)